

Impact of Gandhian Philosophy-Ahimsa in Contemporary Society – An Analysis

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Man is a rational and social creation of God. Man lives in a society and all the actions reactions of the man influence the social behaviour. Society is an organization of human being also, So the functions done by men are important to develop or spoil the nature of society. Here I want to say something about Ahimsa-especially the Ahimsa theory of Mohan Das Karm Chandra Gandhi, popular with the title of Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi or Babu is the foremost pioneer of the Modern India. He is a man of ethico-religious personality, that is why he adopts a non violant means to get our country ridden of the British rulers.

The word Ahimsa has a big meaning Ahimsa is derived from the Sanskrit verb root *san*, which means to kill. Another form *hims* means “desirous to kill”, and the prefix *a-* is a negation. So here the meaning of a Ahimsa is lacking any desire to kill. In another words we can say that literally translated Ahimsa means to be without harm, to be utterly harmless not only to one self and others but to all living beings in the society. Here we can see that the term Ahimsa seems to be as negative one but it is quite positive. One who hold Ahimsa must win overall his evil forces. Ahimsa is more than not doing violence, it is more than attitude, it is a whole way of life. The concept Ahimsa extends to all living beings and therefore protection of the environment, natural habitats and vegetarianism are its natural derivatives. Ahimsa in the Indian tradition is a very important principle. It is called that it has been pronounced by Jain Acharya but it could be traced in Upanishads, Manusmriti and Patanajali Yogasutra. It has been seen in Upanishad as- “the ancient name Adhawara (where not any type

dhwara or himsa is available) suggest the absence of himsa. It could be seen in” Ishopanishad where it is said- ek x`g% dL;fLo/kkue~ (which is of others do not desire) menas here is an indication to be away from the mental violence which is being developed by greediness.¹

In above views Ahimsa is an act of non killing and non injury to any one in thought, action and speech. Mahatma Gandhi modifies this negative meaning of Ahimsa and says that the rigidity of Ahimsa that Jainism preached is quite impractical to follow. Gandhi remarks on the Jain Ahimsa. “Man can rest for a moment like without consciously or unconsciously committing outwards himsa. The very fact of living, eating, drinking, and moving about necessarily involves some himsa surely, destruction of life, be it ever so minute”.² He says that all human beings are equal as they all are the only sons of God. “All men are manifestations of Truth or God so nobody should have feelings of hatred, anger, malice, revenge jealousy etc. The moral qualities underlying the human inner core and originated from love. Without love Ahimsa is impossible. In other words, Ahimsa, in the positive sense is nothing but love. The inherent element of love is fearlessness. So Gandhi says that Ahimsa does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil doer.”³

According to Gandhi Ahimsa is a religious philosophy of life that all living being are pure. Gandhi believe pluralism, he believe in Hindu- muslim unity including all sections of society rich poor. His focus is communal harmony. Gandhi knows how to unite different diversity of India, communal harmony where we need non violence (Ahimsa). Here I am stating that Ahimsa was soul theory in time of Gandhi but there are many changes in the contemporary society. Human beings have been involved to achieve the material values by using different paths of life. In those paths Ahimsa is not being followed fully or I can say that human beings are focusing to show the pseudo character of true life. Many people respond the ideas of Gandhi that no body is able to attain the theory of Gandhian Ahimsa or not every body can be Gandhi and not evry body can fight back. So ultimately Ahimsa is unattainable. They people say that the Ahimsa theory is not practical and moral but Gandhi denies these allegations and says Ahimsa is a moral law that we need to observe independently of the results however it takes place to have great result too. Ahimsa requires action and the name of that action is Satyagrah. Another interesting implication of Gandhi’s way of putting Ahimsa into action is non-

possession. In that context he says that just live so others by which you can care about people. You would not take more than you need instead give your excess to others to save their lives “The world has enough for everyone's need but not enough for everyone's greed.” Thus Ahimsa involves sacrifice and suffering. Sacrifice is an indispensable companion of love. Gandhi says. “love never claims, it ever gives. Love ever suffers, never resents never revenges itself. The taste of love is Tapasya and Tapasya is self suffering”.⁴

So here we can see that Gandhi has answered to those people who say that the theory of Ahimsa is impractical or not doing. Gandhi has established that the persons who are only involved to gathering the material achievements can not see the inner virtues of moral value Ahimsa because Ahimsa demands self suffering and sacrifice. He adopts Satya as like Ahimsa. He does not differentiate between Satya and Ahimsa. He says that satya is end and Ahimsa is means. They are inseparable as the two sides of a coin. Gandhi says “Ahimsa is means and Truth is end. If we take care of means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later, whatever difficulties we encounter, whatever apparent reserves we sustain, we may not quest for Truth which alone is, being God Himself.”⁵

The nature of contemporary social activities are changed than the society activities of Gandhi's imagine. Now a time all welfare societies are a form of society in which every individual is satisfied with his own wants. It is the society where nobody against on the ground of sex, wealth, race, religion or sect. everyone has an equal opportunity in life his personality and career. Contemporary society is influenced by the modernity and post modernity where spiritual values are changed against the material values. People of this society have become egoistic. In this society there is a discrimination among the people in every corner of life. Intolerance, no co-operation, brotherhoodlessness, self satisfaction etc are the essential qualities in maximum human being can be seen. We can see that our contemporary society is very much influenced by the doctrine of monarchy, aristocracy as we are feeling day by day. For the modern country as America, Britane or any other materially developed places such type of attributes are tolerable but in our country India which is known by its culture and spiritually such type of attributes are not lawful naturally to protect the theories given by saints or the thinkers as like Mahatma Gandhi. In this society maximum people are interpreting the negative and practical implication of

Gandhi's theory Ahimsa which would have never been thought of Gandhi even in this dream. This is why every man, every political party each social-organization should adopts Gandhi's theory of Ahimsa in character and deeds. Till when our society will be covered by the darkness of corruption, nepotism and disunity, discrimination, mendacity, casteism, atrocities and exploitation we can understand the Ahimsa theory of Gandhi in true sense. Gandhi's view to remove such types of activities this is very important that a man should always be truthful. When the human being will be truthful in action and in thought then they will be much far from the evil type of activities. According to Gandhi to achieve the Ahimsatmak society all men will have to be generous, kind and compassionate. If all men of society are covered by above mentioned virtues then there will be no chaos in society, no quarrel, no jealousy, no hatred among the human beings. This pious society can be constructed by Ahimsa, we can see the view of Dr Ramjee Singh a famous Gandhivadi saying that- "Ahimsa or non violence must serve as the panacea for our ills-social and economic, political and moral"⁶. Kalghatgi finds the credit of Gandhi in his principle to stimulating the Ahimsa as- "It is method of attaining social and political justice apart from the religious and moral perfections."⁷

In the concept of Gandhian Ahimsa there are many thinkers who criticize that Gandhian theory Ahimsa is not acceptable in the society because the trend of society at the very small things two persons start to quarrel and in last they become killer-enemies for each other. One of them must be killed by the other the other can argue that ailing person was not useful for the society and must be killed. In another example provided by such persons that Ahimsa as Gandhi is love and love only gives, it does not take. It implies that a man should give the human society his affection and goodness by performing his duties towards society without any lust or any return. In this context the duties of political leader and social reformers must be so, but most of our leaders and social reformers, barring a very few exceptions in our society claim to take all the things from the common people of the society and not want to help them. It is the real application of Gandhian Ahimsa in current society. Some criticizers say that of love is self suffering then no body will want to adopt it. It is a common human psychology that a man does not want suffering but happiness. Ahimsa is love hence it is self suffering. Here Gandhi's principle love as generosity and compassion turn into non-violence as suffering and violence. Suffering and

violence are negative values of life. So the principle of Gandhian Ahimsa as a moral value is nothing but a self contradictory principle which has harmed our society and is being harmed it. But these allegations on the Gandhian Ahimsa have no grounds. The persons who are criticizing the theory of Gandhian Ahimsa are not aware by the philosophical aspects of Gandhi. We know if we are human then we have sex, anger, jealousy, affection, hate etc in basic character of human being. These characters are behaved is parameter of being good or bad. Gandhi aspects of well behaved nature of human beings, where truth morality, kindness and brotherhoodness are compulsory Gandhi says that Ahimsa requires pitifulness and kindness. Each and every human being should be pitiful and kind. The service to humanity depends upon these two gentle qualities. If all men of society are pitiful and kind, there will be kind no chaos no exploitation. There will be peace in the society. Gandhi feels that the progress and development of a society needs strife and struggle. This contemporary society is influenced by consequence of different wars, struggle and strives. Gandhi suggests for humanistic society where the value of truth and Ahimsa are essential attributes of human being then there will be no wars and no struggle. Each and every person will be for each other. He points out that nobody wants to suffer himself in the contemporary society. Each and every person wants to enjoy oneself, merely enjoy.

The Gandhian philosophy of Ahimsa is endless. The persons who criticize this theory they do not have well behaviour of spirituality and morality, because most people are involved to only and only their self material development they do not hesitate to give the troubles to the other people they think about only their own-self. Gandhi says that there will be some problems to follow the theory of Ahimsa but it could be done by strong will and truthfulness.

In last as conclusion I will want to say that it is question in the contemporary society that the Gandhian principle Ahimsa must be followed or not? Here my vision is- we can not ignore the fact that without following the principle of Ahimsa the peace is not possible which is desired by every country and countrymen. As example that the terror we can get from Ukraine's recent war against Russia is increasing and we can see how much world need Ahimsa in present scenario-especially considering the nuclear age where one country has the power to destroy another with just on one click, the principle of Ahimsa of

Gandhi is revealed. There are many times when the problems are solved by love and care not by force and himsa. There are many countries and peace keeping organizations work around the world to promote peace rather than militancy when in an era of globalization spiritual power seems to be being built up as a whole. We can see that world is interdependent. We can not wage war, we need peace. Harmony in the society or community becomes very important and must exist in every society in the current time when hatred against the community grows and guides the nations of the world in the wrong directions. In the very last I will conclude to stating that Ahimsa is an active force in the world infact we are practicing it correctly. Ahimsa is active force of the highest order, imperfect man can not grasp the whole of that essence- he would not be able to bear its full blaze but even an infinitesimal fraction of it, when it becomes active within us, can work wonders. Finally I agree with the above Gandhian statement.

References:

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